

May 16, 2006

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'Holding the Line' on Spending

The last few months have been focused on positioning the Division to make better use of its resources and help more customers enter the work force. I appreciate the collective efforts of staff, customers and partners to bring DVR expenditures in line with resources. We are headed in the right direction and need to sustain these efforts ~ My thanks to each of you for your efforts, your creativity and your resourcefulness.

Current Compliance with Federal Standards and Indicators

This year, we've helped 1,173 individuals achieve employment. We continue to meet Standard 1.1, (meet or exceed the number of outcomes achieved last year). Congratulations to customers, employers, staff and partners involved in making this happen!

The rehabilitation rate (percent of all plans that are successful) continues to decline and is now at 45.27%. We must reach 55.8% to pass this important standard. Please share your ideas locally and with me on how we can make **positive** improvement to our rehabilitation rate with customers currently receiving services.

WorkStrides Initiative

There is excitement and optimism surrounding the rollout of the WorkStrides Initiative. Staff involved in the pilots echo the sentiments

of DVR WorkSource liaison Lori Levin when she recently shared "... I have done the complete training process and see a huge value in this work for our agency!"

WorkStrides is a six-week program that guides consumers in a process of self-exploration that helps them make their goals a reality. Participants develop a portfolio that serves as an ongoing record of achievements, skills, experiences and goals to use in developing an IPE. WorkStrides will help customers identify their skills and abilities plus learn local labor market trends and training opportunities. It's a unique way to draw on the experiences of others and work as part of a team.

We are piloting WorkStrides June through September at Renton WorkSource, Thurston Mason Worksource, Silverdale, North Seattle and Spokane. We plan to expand to more sites in early 2007. Western Washington University is helping evaluate pilot results. We'll provide more updates as the initiative moves forward.

And the survey says ...

Nearly all DVR staff completed the 2006 DSHS Employee Survey and I appreciate the thoughtful suggestions about how we can do better. In the coming weeks, we will develop an action plan to address the results. While our results in each area are higher than other DSHS programs, we can and will take steps to improve.

Here are a few quick highlights:

- DVR staff clearly know how their work contributes to the goals of the agency;
- They know what is expected of them at work; and
- They believe their supervisors treat them with dignity and respect.

The areas where we have work to do:

- Staff expressed concern that they don't receive recognition for a job well done;
- Their performance evaluations don't provide them with meaningful information about their performance; and
- They don't have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting their work.

On the positive side, staff identified that in their workgroup:

- People are treated fairly, without discrimination; and
- A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists.

Significantly fewer staff expressed confidence in the decisions made by senior leaders and at the workgroup level staff report we do not use customer feedback to improve work processes.

I extend my sincere thanks to each employee who completed a survey. I look forward to engaging staff, customers and partners in building a more effective organization and making DVR a great place to work.

Survey Results

GMAP

DVR's next GMAP presentation with DSHS Leadership is May 18. We will:

- highlight our continued success increasing the number of individuals achieving employment this year.
- discuss our decision to postpone changes in the Order of Selection priority categories; choosing instead to revise our assessment tool which is expected to increase our accuracy and consistency of determinations and ensure more equitable representation of all disability groups in priority category 1 (MSD: most significantly disabled).
- provide an overview of DVR Performance with a focus on how we expend our resources, how we achieve our outcomes and the impact of Order of Selection.
- share a summary of our actions to address our case management compliance issues and the changes in our business practices.

If you would like a copy of our [GMAP report](#), please let me know. We will be glad to share it. (GMAP stands for Government Management Accountability and Performance and is one of Governor's initiatives.)

2006 NDEAM theme

It's never too early to start planning. This year's theme for October's celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month

(NDEAM) is - ***Americans with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce.***

DVR Reorganization

I am in the process of finalizing a plan for reorganization of DVR. Highlights include: restructuring the field from two to three geographic Areas (Area 1: Vancouver to SeaTac and Kent; Area 2: Seattle to Bellingham; Area 3: Central & Eastern Washington). I believe this will improve field support, training and networking for staff and partners. I will recruit for five leadership positions, including one Field Services Administrator, one Field Services Deputy and three Area Managers. I'm also reorganizing state office, including creating a Planning & Evaluation Unit. We are working through the personnel process and anticipate initiating recruitments this Summer.

In the next few weeks, we'll be making decisions about the provision of benefits planning and completing our Navigator contracts. All of these changes impact our staff. I appreciate how difficult it is now and will continue to be as we move through these changes. We value the contributions all staff have made and look forward to building strong teams to meet the needs of our customers.

State Rehabilitation Council is recruiting

Please assist the SRC in recruiting additional business representatives to serve on this Governor's appointed policy partnership with DVR. If you know of someone who may be interested, please have them contact Joelle Brouner at: brounjm@dshs.wa.gov or by phone at (360) 407-3605.

Travel to the Middle East:

Earlier in May, I was honored to be invited to serve as a delegate to the First International Forum on Children with Special Needs held in Qatar. Representing Mobility International USA, I had the opportunity to provide input on evidence-based strategies to address the needs of young adults with disabilities served through the Shafallah Center in Doha, Qatar.

Final thoughts:

Spring is a wonderful time of year. It offers us a chance to grow, re-energize and thrive. I appreciate the work that you do and your continued passion for improving our services.

Thank you –

Lynnae Ruttledge

Director

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